AIR POUCH PRIORITY

UNCLASSIFIED (Security Classification)

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

714.00(W)/1-1653

790Q4-1365

FROM: AMEMBASSY, GUATEMALA

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

DATE: January 16, 1953

REF: ---

41 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION: OLI	DEPT. INFO: ARA I IBS IFI TCA UNA ME IPS IIAA MC
	REC'D JAN 17	OTHER INFO: ARMY NAVY AIR CIA OSD

DEPARTMENT OF STATE RECEIVED JAN 27 1953 OLI - IAD MESSAGE CENTER

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 3 for State, Army and Air Departments from SAA - Section I

DC/R Central Files

This Document Must Be Returned to

714.00(W)/1-1653

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 11 JUL 78 PER CIMMA OFFICE ARA FADRC FOI CASE NO. 740332

SUMMARY

With voting in the Congressional elections beginning this morning, the past week has been devoted to intensive campaigning by all parties, but there has been no basic change in the prospect of a substantial victory by the pro-government "Democratic Electoral Front" despite a slight improvement in the position of the opposition in a few Departments due to continued divisions of the Administration's strength. On the eve of the elections the country was generally calm.

Illustrating the strong emphasis placed here by conservatives on religious sentiment in combatting Communism, anti-Communist organizations announced their intention of forming a "Democratic Christian Party" after the elections and the anti-Communist candidates in the Department of Guatemala led a large crowd in a demonstration of support for Msgr. Mariano ROSSELL y Arellano, Archbishop of Guatemala.

The Guatemalan Press Association protested strongly against a National Agrarian Department order which would have subjected journalists to fines and possible imprisonment for "false" news on the agrarian reform.

Dr. Raúl OSEGUEDA, the Foreign Minister, indicated uncertainty whether Central American countries would or would not attend a conference of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and the Central American States which Ecuador has proposed take place in Panama on May 24.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

The closing days of the Congressional electoral campaign found all of the candidates working intensively in their constituencies and by local standards there were a minimum of

LWC FILED FEB 4 1953

JCHill/hhm
1/15/53 REPORTER

UNCLASSIFIED

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

UNCLASSIFIED

Encl. No.
Desp. No.
From

5790004-1366

disturbances and unrest. The Administration's "Democratic Electoral Front" moved its headquarters out of the National Palace to a city office and intensified its publicity efforts, especially for the candidacies of the Communist leaders José Manuel FORTUNY in the Department of Guatemala and Carlos Manuel PELLECER in the Department of Escuintla who continued to receive the leading place in election articles in the official and pro-government press. The great preponderance of "Democratic Electoral Front" posters and banners observable in the capital and provincial towns recently visited by Embassy officers was illustrative of the superiority of the resources of the Administration candidates as compared to the Opposition candidates.

In a few provincial Departments the Opposition's prospects were slightly improved during the week by the failure of the local branches of the Administration parties to consolidate behind the official "Democratic Electoral Front" candidate. There has also been a shift of a few local affiliates of the Administration parties to the new leftist, anti-Communist Partido Revolucionario Ortodoxo (PRO). Whether these currents will have an appreciable effect on the voting in the constituencies involved remains to be seen.

The Minister of Interior, Sr. Augusto CHARNAUD MacDonald, again gave assurances of free elections and moved to keep order by instructing the authorities in the Departments of Zacapa and Sacatepéquez to enforce the order issued in June 1952 for all permits for carrying firearms to be called in and to punish persons carrying arms without permits (Weeka No. 25). He also transferred to another post the Governor of the Department of Zacapa, where there have been clashes between partisans of rival pro-government candidates. The rest of the country is generally calm although there are the usual charges and denials of interference by the authorities in the Opposition's campaign and PRO spokesmen claimed that Communist hoodlums had broken the windows in its Guatemala City headquarters.

The Comité Cívico Nacional (CCN), the Comité de Estudiantes Universitarios Anticomunistas (CEUA) and affiliated organizations announced they would form a new anti-Communist political party called the Partido Demócrata Cristiana (Democratic Christian Party) after the elections. The CCN and CEUA have been civil associations without the right to run their own candidates or the other legal rights of political parties, a fact which has put them at a disadvantage in dealing with the PUA, their principal rival for leadership of the anti Communist movement.

A large crowd led by the anti-Communist candidates Luis ARENAS and Jorge Adán SERRANO and carrying placards saying "Our Archbishop has been insulted by Communists", demonstrated

UNCLASSIFIED

in Guatemala City on January 10 in support of Msgr. Mariano Rossell y Arellano, Archbishop of Guatemala. The latter has recently been the center of attacks and controversy as a result of protests by a group of people in the village of Esquipulas that he intended permanently to remove their holy image, the "Black Christ of Esquipulas", but he said he only intended for a reproduction to circulate about the country. The Archbishop told the crowd that the attacks had been stimulated by "enemies of the Church or disoriented Catholics" and asked that they be forgiven, as he had forgiven them.

The Communists' viewpoint about the legality of the registration of the Communist Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo (PGT) on the Civil Registry (Weeka No. 1) was advanced by a government official when Sr. Alfonso ORANTES, President of the National Electoral Board which is inquiring into the matter, made public his "private opinion" that the inscription of the PGT was perfectly legal. The Partido Acción Revolucionaria (PAR), the leading Administration party, followed up this advance by recommending to the "Democratic Electoral Front" that steps be taken to have the PUA stricken from the Civil Registry for failing to meet the requirements of the law but the Front decided not to do this lest it later be claimed that its candidates were not elected democratically. The PUA has been in the forefront of the effort to have the registration of the PGT declared illegal and this week presented the National Electoral Board with extracts of the Communist newspaper Octubre as proof that the party had the type of international character forbidden by Article 32 of the Constitution.

Again underscoring the unchecked administrative powers conferred on the Executive Branch by the Agrarian Reform Law, the Guatemalan Press Association (APG) on January 9 protested strongly to the National Agrarian Department (DAN) about a DAN bulletin of January 5 warning newspapers that "publishing news or sensational items containing false information will oblige the National Agrarian Department to impose punishment in conformity with the provisions of the law," and requiring that any information received by newspapers without signature or stamp showing its origin be submitted to the DAN for verification. The punishment would presumably be a $2,000 administrative fine for "anti-agrarian reform activities". Major Alfonso MARTINEZ, Chief of the DAN, said that the bulletin had been sent out by subordinates without his cognizance.

The Communist-inspired National "Peace" Committee on January 14 addressed a message to President TRUMAN asking for the commutation of the death sentence of Julius and Ethel ROSENBERG, the United States citizens convicted of atomic espionage. The message was signed by Sr. Luis CARDOZA y Aragón,

a leading Guatemalan poet and ex-Minister to the Soviet Union, who this week made a nationwide broadcast over the official radio on the "Democratic Electoral Front" program.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Reflecting the confusion that has been caused in official circles here by the Ecuadoran proposal for a joint meeting of Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and the Central American States in Panama on May 24 (Weeka No. 1), the official Diario de Centro América of January 9 reported that the Foreign Office on December 31 had communicated to the Ecuadoran Foreign Minister Guatemala's acceptance of his invitation, but that another message would shortly be sent stating that any decision to attend could only be made by the Organization of Central American States (ODECA) which will meet here on May 2. In an interview on January 14, Foreign Minister Raúl Osegueda added that no invitation had been received from the Panamanian Foreign Office and that he could not tell whether the Central American States would attend or not.

Reviving the perennial "Belize Question", all sectors of the local press featured, under a San Salvador dateline, an interview in which Sr. Roberto CANESSA, the Salvadoran Foreign Minister, stated that he did not view with sympathy the proposed British Caribbean Federation which would incorporate Belize (British Honduras), a territory claimed by Guatemala. Sr. Canessa was quoted as saying the proposal tended to confirm colonialism in America while the Salvadoran Government had always stood for the abolition of colonies in the Western Hemisphere.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Mr. Hubert Fauntleroy JULIAN, who styles himself the "Black Eagle of Harlem" and has acted as an arms procurement agent for Guatemala, has returned to this country despite his statement on leaving in October 1952 that he was through with Guatemala. He was seen on January 13 by newsmen in the corridors of the Foreign Office. In contrast to his previous flamboyant and boastful behavior, he refused to give any information other than to say he was here on private business.

For the Ambassador:

William L. Krieg
Counselor of Embassy

Contributor:
Col. A. E. McCormick, Army Attaché

Copies:
C. A. Missions and other routine distribution

UNCLASSIFIED

RL